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DEPARTMENT FOR S/E NATSIOS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#) [ER](#) [ET](#) [LY](#) [CD](#)
SUBJECT: SUDAN, DARFUR: UN ADVISOR PEKKA HAVISTO BRIEFS SE
NATSIOS JULY 4

REF: KHARTOUM 1083

Classified By: POLCOUNS LARRY ANDRE, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Pekka Haavisto, senior UN Advisor on Darfur, briefed the U.S. President's Special Envoy for Sudan Andrew Natsios on UN/AU efforts to organize effective peace talks for Darfur. Haavisto discussed the upcoming Tripoli and Mombasa (Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, CHD) meetings in the context of the UN/AU roadmap, which he sees leading toward peace negotiations in August. Haavisto offered thoughts on the various regional and rebel players, where they stand, and how they can be brought into the roadmap framework, as well as on AU/UN cooperation. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Special Envoy Natsios met with Pekka Haavisto, Senior Advisor to UN Special Envoy Jan Eliason, July 4 for a two-hour discussion of the UN/AU efforts to organize effective peace talks for Darfur. S/E Natsios was accompanied by his COS Andrew Steinfeld, SA Lisa Witte, and Acting Nairobi Polcouns Craig White (notetaker).

Wider View: Elections 2009 and the SPLM

¶3. (C) Haavisto said that both the National Congress Party and the SPLM want the 2009 elections to take place. He said Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) President Salva Kiir is planning a big Darfur civil society meeting in August, "with signatories of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) and non-signatories." Kiir's timeline runs through January 2008, which is too long a process for the AU/UN time frame. The head of the SPLM task force on Darfur recently asked for telephone numbers of the rebels, indicating that the task force had not been in touch with key participants.

Radicalized Camps

¶4. (C) Haavisto said the younger generation in the Darfur camps is becoming "very radical." They see the SLM (Sudan Liberation Movement) as having failed, and do not even want to be registered in the camps. Paris-based Abdulwahid al-Nur has become a "mythological leader" for the youth. The Fur, he said, traditionally want a single, very strong leader, and young people now see other SLM leaders as "part of the mess." "By saying no to everything," Abdulwahid has embodied the dreams of the younger generation in the camps.

Government Attacks in Jebel Mara

¶5. (C) S/E Natsios told Haavisto that Abdulwahid reported four recent attacks in the Fur area, two of which succeeded. Haavisto said the groups in the eastern Jebel Mara area are

very weak, and their forces are intended "for home defense only." The government claimed it sent in forces to calm the border between rebel leaders Abdulshafi and Abdulwahid's forces, an area Haavisto agreed was very tense. Haavisto believed the government move might have aimed at "controlling not occupying" the area.

One Major Difficulty

¶6. (SBU) Each of the regional powers "has its favorite rebel group," Haavisto observed. Each player can "change the balance by giving 50 Toyotas here or there," leading to new facts on the ground that any negotiations have to take into account.

Darfur Rebel Leaders

¶7. (C) Abdulwahid al-Nur: Abdulwahid "has 650 fighters in the East." He was needed for the CHD talks in Mombasa, but was still "pending," Haavisto said. He added that a recent suggestion he had heard from the UN was to put Abdulwahid under "temporary travel sanctions." Haavisto thought the idea a good one, as it might push Abdulwahid back into the region and pressure him to join talks. He has an Eritrean passport, Haavisto noted, and no refugee status. Haavisto complained that Abdulwahid's precondition for talks is disarmament of the janjaweed. He offered to transport Abdulwahid to one set of talks in a helicopter with him, saying "if they try to kill you, they will get me too," but Abdulwahid turned him down. Despite this unhelpful attitude, "he is a hero" in the camps.

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- Ahmed Diraij: Diraij "has 1,000 fighters," but they are in the East, and the Eritreans "are taking care of them," Haavisto said. Diraij was willing to come to the CHD talks.

- Ahmed Abdulshafi: Abdulshafi, like Diraij, was willing to come to the CHD talks, Haavisto said. However, he has lost clout among the rebel leaders, as some of his commanders have gone to the government, and some to Asmara. The Eritreans say he is "ten years too young" to lead the rebels, Haavisto reported, and in a meeting among the rebel leaders, his silence and the lack of deference paid him showed his current weak status among them.

- Khalil Ibrahim: Khalil will not go to Asmara in the near future, Haavisto said. Haavisto met him "on the ground" in Darfur after he had been "kicked out of Chad." Haavisto said Khalil "had 50 Toyotas" and impressive new anti-aircraft weapons, and was in a good mood. When Haavisto told him "Chad kicked you out," he responded "no, we finished helping Deby." He introduced his commanders to Haavisto, who noted they were all Zaghawas, and between 30 and 40 years old, "not child soldiers like some of them have."

Eritrea

¶8. (C) The AU/UN recently "had a big success" in taking the Eritreans to South Sudan, leading to three-way discussions, Haavisto said. The success in Haavisto's view, however, is the fact that the discussions took place, as he indicated the Eritrean approach is not helpful to southern Sudanese, because it will not lead to the peace the South needs. The Eritreans "know the SPLM is the baby of the international community," and "want to use it as a Trojan horse." When S/E Natsios asked why, in Haavisto's view, Eritrea with its small population is so intensely involved in so many trouble spots, Haavisto said it is "not a country but a movement," which makes borders irrelevant for the leadership.

¶9. (C) Asmara's leadership was working to foment a coup (in

Sudan) in 2004, one Eritrean leader told Haavisto "after five whiskeys," but after the CPA, the Eritrean said, "we changed." Haavisto said the GOS has two tracks for a political process. One is through Eritrea and one is through the UN/AU. Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Mutrif Siddiq told Haavisto that "the Eritreans are negotiating for us, we need them, but we will never trust what they agree to--you shouldn't either." Haavisto found that a dangerous game, because key participants will not have bought into parts of the agreement, a situation that also occurred in eastern Sudan.

¶10. (C) Center for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD) Initiative: Asmara leadership tends to believe the CHD initiative is an attempt to "break the Asmara front" and "humiliate Eritrea," a "hostile takeover," Haavisto said, and as a result said initially that SLM leader Khamis Abdullah would not go to Mombasa. The Eritreans began by insisting that talks take place in Asmara. Haavisto told the Eritreans that neither Shafi (Ahmed Abdulshafi) nor Khalil Ibrahim would go to Asmara, and Salva Kiir says Khalil Ibrahim is not welcome in southern Sudan (and others such as Shafi would not go), so a neutral venue had to be found. Haavisto was concerned that Asmara could either prevent "its" SLM leaders from going to Mombasa, or send them with a disruptive agenda. Several leaders, including Abdulwahid, could be spoilers. (Haavisto said he told the Eritreans that "everyone is fed up with Abdulwahid.") Asmara created the National Redemption Front (NRF) and believes the SLM as a whole will never unite, so attempts to unite it are actually aimed at undermining Asmara.

¶11. (C) Haavisto believed the AU and UN need to be firm with Asmara. He believed the Eritrean leadership would send representatives to Tripoli despite not being happy with that meeting. The Eritreans are ready to cave on the Mombasa meeting if a firm line is taken, he said. However, both the Tripoli and the Mombasa meetings are tests for Asmara, he added. Haavisto thought U.S. engagement with Asmara on the CHD meeting would be useful. He encouraged S/E Natsios to go to Asmara or to meet with the Eritreans on the margin of upcoming meetings.

Government of Sudan

¶12. (C) S/E Natsios asked what Haavisto thought the message to Khartoum should be. Haavisto responded with three points: (1) the GOS is invited to Tripoli, and its presence there is important, whatever its current problems with Libya. (2)

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Please close down the separate Asmara track, bring it under the AU/UN umbrella. (3) Prepare to show flexibility on the DPA.

- U.S. Embassy Khartoum, and Street Opening: MFA Chef de Cabinet Ali Yusuf told Haavisto the MFA had warned Bashir that opening the road in front of the U.S. Embassy was too inflammatory a step, Haavisto said. It was Bashir who insisted, Yusuf told Haavisto.

The AU/UN Strategy

¶13. (C) The Special Envoys want to see whether, in the Tripoli and Mombasa meetings, the political leaders accept the AU/UN road map, Haavisto said. If so, there needs to be another meeting "to create a common platform." Then the third phase, "the talks," would follow. "In my dreams, this happens in August," Haavisto said. After mid-July (and assuming the rebels agree roughly on a common position), it will be time to press the government side. "I would hope for final talks in two weeks, not one year." Although the DPA has been rejected by most rebel groups, they admit to Haavisto that "they can live with 80 percent of it." We can't go back to the declaration of principles, Haavisto

said. A one or two page statement is needed, covering the key issues, "to show the people." An appendix can be added to this which is essentially the DPA, but without that name. The elements of a deal are: a Vice President for Darfur, compensation, a serious reconstruction plan, disarmament (of heavy weapons) of both the janjaweed and the rebels. (The rebels understand that nomads need some weapons, he added.) The rebels don't trust the planned referendum, which they think, as does Haavisto, will be designed to "split the Fur." Haavisto said one good element is that the AU wants to renegotiate the ceasefire.

14. (U) S/E Natsios' staff cleared this message after departure.
SLUTZ